



# GUARDIAN OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

July 25, 2008

## Preparedness and Planning

### GAO Reports on Nation's Emergency Preparedness and Response

On June 11, the U.S. Congress's Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight met and received testimony regarding the nation's emergency preparedness and response efforts. Members of the Committee requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) provide additional comments to a number of post-hearing questions. GAO's responses are [available online](#).

### GAO Reports on States' Surge Capacity

Potential terrorist attacks and the possibility of naturally occurring disease outbreaks have raised concerns about the "surge capacity" of the nation's health care systems to respond to mass casualty events. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified four key components of preparing for medical surge: (1) increasing hospital capacity, (2) identifying alternate care sites, (3) registering medical volunteers, and (4) planning for altering established standards of care. [GAO recommended](#) that the Secretary of HHS ensure that the department serve as a clearinghouse for sharing among the states altered standards of care guidelines developed by individual states or medical experts.

### Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities

The National Resource Center on Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities is the nation's first [online clearinghouse](#) and information exchange portal designed to facilitate communication, networking and collaboration to improve preparedness, build resilience and eliminate disparities for racially and ethnically diverse communities in public health emergencies. The National Resource Center features hundreds of annotated resources, including publications, courses and training curriculum, research and evaluation tools, promising programs and projects, and translated materials organized by various topics, languages, communities, states, target audiences and organizations. News, updates and events within the field are also featured.

### Resource Guide for Public Health Preparedness

The Resource Guide for Public Health Preparedness is a gateway to freely available [online resources](#) related to public health preparedness. Resources include expert guidelines, factsheets, websites, research reports, articles, and other tools aimed at the public health community. All resources are cataloged and may be searched by keyword or browsed by topic.

### Chronic Disease in Times of Disaster

Careful planning and preparations are needed to care for populations whose health is already compromised and who are more vulnerable than healthy people to the stresses and disruptions caused by disasters. Pre-

## News

### Is Your Long Term Care Facility Prepared for an Emergency?

This free training equips senior living and long-term care professionals with the core competencies to address the medical and psychosocial consequences of natural disasters and other public health emergencies. See [page 8](#) for full details.

### Nursing Homes Unprepared for Pandemic According to Research

Research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on July 22 suggests that nursing homes are not equipped to relieve hospitals and other health centers in the case of an influenza pandemic. See [page 4](#) for details.

### FDA Believes Jalapeno to Blame

On July 23, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that one jalapeno pepper sample is a positive genetic match with the *Salmonella* Saintpaul strain causing the current outbreak. See [page 5](#) for more information.

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August 8, 2008

venting Chronic Disease (PCD) has established a site for the exchange of information on [chronic disease planning and response](#) in times of disaster. PCD is a peer-reviewed electronic journal published by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### **New Programs Enhance Drug and Food Safety**

Two [new international programs](#) have been initiated to improve and enhance drug and food safety. The first initiative is a pilot project the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is undertaking with its counterparts in the European Union and Australia. The project will initially focus on makers of active pharmaceutical ingredients. If successful, this program could expand to include other types of manufacturing facilities. The novel collaboration will allow the federal government to take advantage of information gathered by trusted inspection and regulatory systems in other countries. The second initiative is a third-party certification pilot program involving aquacultured (farm-raised) shrimp. The project is designed to help the FDA learn how to evaluate third-party certification programs and implement them in the field -- a key part of leveraging the additional resources of the private sector and other regulators.



### **Project Bioshield**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a [progress report](#) for Project Bioshield, a federal initiative that promotes the development and acquisition of medical countermeasures for public health emergencies. The new report details how the project, which was authorized by Congress in 2004, has appropriated the \$5.6 billion Bioshield Special Reserve Fund. HHS noted a \$17.5 million contract which supported the development and acquisition of a pediatric formulation of potassium iodide to protect the thyroid following a nuclear or radiological event. In addition, HHS awarded \$4 million in grants to national universities and laboratories for research into agents that could help to eliminate radioactive substances from the body.

### **Monitoring Health Effects of Wildfires using the BioSense System**

During October 21-26, 2007, wildfires consumed hundreds of thousands of acres and forced the evacuation of more than 300,000 persons in San Diego County, California. [This report](#) describes some of the health effects of the wildfires based on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's BioSense system, which receives emergency department (ED) patient chief complaint information and physician diagnosis codes from six hospitals in San Diego County.



### **MDA Emergency Management Website**

The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has created a link directly to their [emergency management webpage](#). The most recent additions include Emergency Planning for Fairs and Fair Emergency Scenarios. The presentations from January's Food & Agriculture Border Gateway Summit are still available on the website.

### **Key Legal Issues for Healthcare Providers**

Co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [this report](#) from the American Health Lawyers Association addresses and reflects the perspectives of the myriad professionals along the continuum of health-care and public health legal preparedness regarding legal impediments, gaps

and implementation challenges in the event of a pandemic or other such wide-scale disaster.

### **FAS-CAT Web Tool Available**

The DHS National Center for Food Protection & Defense released the Food and Agriculture System Criticality Assessment Tool (FAS-CAT). [This tool](#) is designed to help assess systems within the food and agriculture sector.

### **August Foot & Mouth Disease Exercise**

On August 26, the State of Michigan will be having a Foot & Mouth Disease exercise, testing the state's abilities to perform a number of responses that would be necessary to combat this type of disaster. In addition to testing the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Michigan Departments of State Police, Natural Resources, and Environmental Quality will be key participants, as will Michigan's Veterinary Corps.



### **Public Health Emergency Exercise Toolkit**

[This toolkit](#) from the Columbia University School of Nursing is intended to guide local public health agency staff in 1) developing, implementing, & evaluating emergency drills & exercises, & 2) facilitating the public health aspects of larger, multiagency emergency exercise events. The toolkit includes templates, checklists, & forms to assist with every stage of the exercise process.

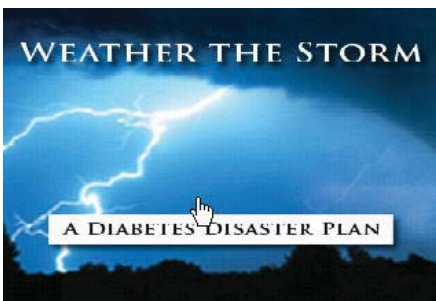
## **Communications**

### **Adolescent Immunization Conference Webcast**

The 2008 Adolescent Immunization Conference is now available on [webcast](#). The primary goals of this conference were to promote adolescent immunizations in Michigan, educate providers about newly recommended adolescent vaccines, overcome challenges to vaccinating adolescents, discuss strategies for increasing adolescent immunization rates, and give providers the tools to communicate with parents, pre-teens, teens, and adolescents through college age about the importance of vaccination.

### **Diabetics Preparedness Checklist**

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) and the Eli Lilly Company have issued a series of recommendations designed to help diabetics prepare for a public health emergency. The document, titled "[Weather the Storm: A Diabetes Disaster Plan](#)" suggests that patients boost preparedness by making a list of all medical conditions and prior surgeries, and creating a medical history that details diabetes-related complications. In addition, the groups recommend drafting a list of medications that includes active prescription information and any adverse reactions to drugs, as well as preparing and adequately storing a 30-day supply of medications for diabetes and all other conditions.



### **Food Security Information Online**

The Center for Food Security & Public health continues to develop [materials](#)

that are of use across the food & agriculture continuum. New materials there include Flood Disaster Resources for People, Pets, & Livestock, and Animal Shelter Infection Control. They also have material on animal diseases, including highly pathogenic avian influenza, and biological risk reduction materials for livestock producers and veterinarians.

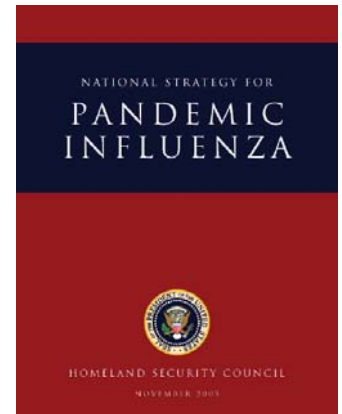
### **Preparedness Requires Responders to Become Teachers**

Learning is facilitated when organizations foster communication, training, or briefings to keep personnel not involved in the disaster up-to-date. Emergency management and disaster studies are multi-disciplinary areas of work and study. Research in these areas will often thus require exposure to multiple disciplines or professions. [This study](#) gathered and analyzed data from disaster preparedness professionals, emergency management students, and pertinent federal workers. The survey was designed to identify if the workers' or agencies' responses to Hurricane Katrina affected the disaster response knowledge of responders and their coworkers.

## **Pandemic Planning**

### **GAO Report on Pandemic Influenza**

The *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* states that in an influenza pandemic, the primary response will come from states and localities. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked to (1) describe how selected states and localities are planning for an influenza pandemic and who they involved, (2) describe the extent to which selected states and localities conducted exercises to test their influenza pandemic planning and incorporated lessons learned as a result, and (3) identify how the federal government can facilitate or help improve state and local efforts to plan and exercise for an influenza pandemic. GAO conducted site visits to five states and 10 localities. [GAO recommended](#) that the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security, in coordination with other federal agencies, convene additional meetings of the states in the five federal influenza pandemic regions to help them address identified gaps in their planning. HHS generally concurred with the recommendation and DHS concurred. The GAO report is available online.



### **Most Nursing Homes Not Ready for Pandemics**

Research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on July 22 suggests that nursing homes are not equipped to relieve hospitals and other health centers in the case of an influenza pandemic. The researchers sent a questionnaire to all state health departments or centers for Medicare and Medicaid-registered nursing homes in Nebraska and Michigan to assess their preparedness. [The results](#) indicated that 52 percent of nursing homes in Michigan and Nebraska do not have a plan for any pandemic, and of those that do have a plan, only 10 percent have practiced it. Specific areas of improvement for nursing homes include communication with nearby health departments and hospitals at the planning stage.

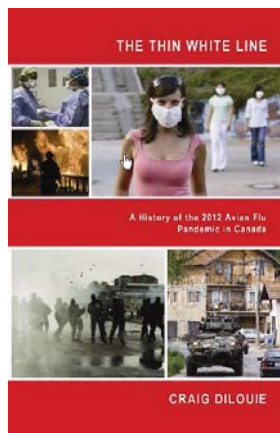
### **AHRQ Releases Report on Home Healthcare during a Pandemic**

On July 8, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare, Research and Quality (AHRQ) released [a report](#) on the issues and resources associated with home healthcare during a pandemic. According to

AHRQ, there are nearly 18,000 different home healthcare organizations operating in the U.S., ranging from home healthcare agencies to hospice facilities, and most are non-governmental and non-profit institutions. AHRQ's report offers insight on how the home healthcare sector may engage in community pandemic planning processes. It also covers the categories of supplies and resources that may be needed for home healthcare during a pandemic, as well as potential barriers to participation.

### New Pandemic Flu Videos

New [pandemic influenza videos](#) on public health hygiene and personal preparedness will be released in August 2008 for the 'Take the Lead: Working Together to Prepare Now' campaign. These materials will be used during September, which is national preparedness month.



### *The Thin White Line*

*The Thin White Line* is a book of speculative fiction describing a severe influenza pandemic in the year 2012, focusing on the Canadian experience. This book creates a near-future scenario of how such an event might unfold in Canada, with every major prediction based on meticulous research of government response plans, scientific research and past pandemics to maximize realism. Presented as a history book written several months after a future pandemic has ended, it interweaves a written history of events and dates with an oral history of people who survived this dark chapter in Canada's history. The book is [available online](#), free of charge.

### Annals of Medicine – Singapore

The Annals of Medicine – Singapore has published their [latest edition](#) on pandemic influenza and antimicrobial drug resistance. This edition includes an editorial, original articles, review articles, and a risk communication commentary. The resource is available online.

### PlanFirst Webcasts

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has developed a [PlanFirst Webcast Series](#). Topics in this series include home care, healthcare facility planning, business planning, and personal preparedness. HHS wants to use these webcasts during September, which is national preparedness month. HHS is identifying outreach activities for local partners to choose from as they implement the program, and will make those suggestions available soon.

## Surveillance

### FDA Isolates Pepper as Culprit in *Salmonella* Outbreak

On July 23, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that one jalapeno pepper sample is a positive genetic match with the *Salmonella* Saintpaul strain causing the current *Salmonella* outbreak. The positive sample was obtained during an FDA inspection at a produce distribution center in McAllen, Texas. The pepper was grown on a farm in Mexico, however, that does not mean that the pepper was contaminated in Mexico. FDA is also asking consumers to avoid eating raw jalapeno peppers or foods made from raw jalapeno peppers until further notice in order to prevent additional cases of illness. This recommendation does not include cooked or pickled jalapeno

peppers. Visit the [FDA website](#) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC website](#)) for further details.

### **Virus Transfer from PPE to Skin and Clothing**

A study published in Emerging Infectious Diseases examined how healthcare workers who use personal protective equipment (PPE) can end up contaminating themselves. The researchers concluded that updated PPE removal protocols need to be addressed. The study is [available online](#).

### **Are Home-made Face Masks Effective against Infectious Disease?**

A study published in the Public Library of Science (PLOS) ONE addressed the issue of using home-made face masks during emergencies to protect against infectious disease. They found that home-made face masks provide some protection, but not as much as a surgical mask or respirator. The entire study is [available online](#).

## **Regional News**

### **Region 3 Updates**

The Region 3 Healthcare Preparedness Network has just completed deployment of a broad-based video conferencing system for the hospitals and Medical Control Authorities in their fourteen counties. This system will provide regional partners with an additional layer of redundant communications. In addition to its emergency use, the new system will allow members of the various regional workgroups to remotely meet. This is a considerable advantage considering Region 3 covers nearly 9000 square miles.

Region 3 is also beginning deployment of satellite phones to eleven hospitals and the Regional Medical Coordination Center. These phones will also provide additional communication capacity for these hospitals during an emergency. As with the present 800 MHz radios and the EMResource/HAvBED systems, these satellite phones will be tested monthly.

In May, Region 3 participated in a regional full-scale exercise in Saginaw County in response to a simulated series of tornados. As part of this exercise, an Acute Care Center was activated and the region's patient tracking system was tested. Numerous issues were identified with the present patient tracking plan and these will be addressed by the Region in the next few months.

In addition to these activities, Region 3 has just finished testing four online training modules developed through contract with Comprehensive Emergency Management Associates (CEMA) of Lansing. These modules cover the Region 3 Medical Coordination Center, Alternate Care Center trailer deployment, Mass Casualty Incident trailer deployment, and basic communications refresher training. Once final EMS continuing education certification is received, these modules will be placed online and made available to all regional partners.

On June 25, Region 3 held its second Mass Fatality Conference at the Dow Event Center in Saginaw. This conference was attended by approximately 100 professionals. The featured speaker, Mr. Peter Tehan, is an internationally recognized expert in mass fatality response. The responses from the attendees showed that there is considerable interest in this series, and plans have started for a third conference next year.

On July 9, the Region hosted its first public information officer (PIO) training conference, also at the Dow Event Center. This session had approximately ninety participants and was very well received. Region 3 has already been approached to explain this conference next year.

For more information on the activities of the Region 3 Healthcare Preparedness Network, please contact Mr. Jim Brasseur at (989) 758-3712.

## Other News

### Impacts of Decontamination Technologies on Building Materials

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is investigating decontamination technologies for restoring public buildings to a usable state after a terrorist contamination event. In the context of decontamination, contaminants of interest are those that can persist on indoor surfaces and can lead to a continuing chance of exposure long after the contamination event occurs.

### Presidential Disaster Declaration for Michigan

On July 14, Michigan received a Presidential Disaster Declaration for eleven counties impacted by the June 6-13 storms. The declaration opened the door to federal aid for hard-hit production agriculture as well as local infrastructure.



## Training & Education

### Food and Agriculture Safety Workshop

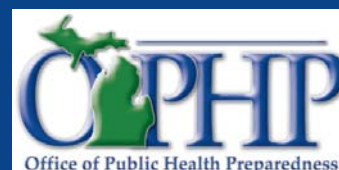
The Michigan Food and Agriculture Defense Working Group is hoping to coordinate a work-shop in Lansing on September 23. The seminar will touch on basic issues such as: facility security issues, asset characterization, vulnerability analysis, and cyber control systems analysis. This will be a full-day seminar in the Lansing area with a cost per company / per attendee. A minimum number of participants is required in order to offer this workshop, so please indicate your availability to Brad Deacon (deaconb9@michigan.gov) immediately!

| Date/Time        | Event Details  | Location    |
|------------------|--|-------------|
| Online           | <b>Plague Training Module</b><br>Eight-lesson web-based module designed to teach you about the natural epidemiology of plague & how to manage it as both a natural disease & an intentional attack. Available for continuing education credit. See <a href="#">this link</a> for more information.   | Online      |
| Aug. 12-14, 2008 | <b>National Conference on Health Communication and Marketing</b><br><a href="#">This conference</a> will give participants: an environment to present findings and recommendations from health marketing, communication and media research; an opportunity to network as well as promote information sharing and interdisciplinary collaboration within the health communication, marketing and media community; and advance the practice of health communication, marketing and media through sharing exemplary programs. | Atlanta, GA |

| Date/Time                 | Event Details   | Location   |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Aug. 14, 2008<br>1-2:30pm | <b>Mass Antibiotic Dispensing: Engaging At-risk Populations</b><br>The capacity to reach every person in the community is the goal of emergency preparedness planning. This will be especially important during a public health emergency that requires mass antibiotic dispensing to the entire population within the Cities Readiness Initiative goal of 48 hours. In <a href="#">this broadcast</a> , experts in the process of defining, locating, and reaching at-risk populations as well as state and local public health professionals who have used this process will share their experiences.   | TBA  |
| Aug. 26-27, 2008          | <b>Is Your Long Term Care Facility Prepared for an Emergency?</b><br>PREPARE equips senior living and long-term care professionals with the core competencies to address the medical and psychosocial consequences of natural disasters and other public health emergency preparedness and response concerns. Two staff members from each organization/community are trained as PREPARE Specialists through a two-day train-the-trainer workshop. They gain the necessary tools to teach the eight learning modules to their staff. There is no charge for this training. See the <a href="#">informational flyer</a> for more information, including registration details. | MSU<br>Mgmt Education Center<br>811 Sq Lake Road<br>Troy, MI |
| Aug. 28, 2008<br>12-2pm   | <b>Immunization Update 2008</b><br>This <a href="#">webcast</a> will provide up-to-date information on the rapidly changing field of immunization. Anticipated topics include influenza and zoster vaccines, recently approved vaccines, and updates on vaccine supplies and vaccine safety.  | Webcast Only   |
| Sept. 9-10, 2008          | <b>Introduction to Emergency Management</b><br>This entry-level, <a href="#">two-day course</a> provides an overview of Michigan emergency management and the homeland security system. It focuses on disaster management by highlighting the laws, policies, and practices of government and private sector, with a critical look at past disasters and lessons learned. It is strongly recommended for all entry-level or returning emergency managers.   | Lansing, MI  |
| Nov. 20-21, 2008          | <b>Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Train-the-Trainer</b><br>This <a href="#">two-day course</a> will provide participants with the skills to teach the CERT program, while emphasizing the basic course along with the development of a program in their community. Previous experience providing and facilitating instruction for adults is desirable. Note: This is a course for CERT trainers and program managers-not for individuals desiring to become CERT team members.  | Auburn Hills, MI   |



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